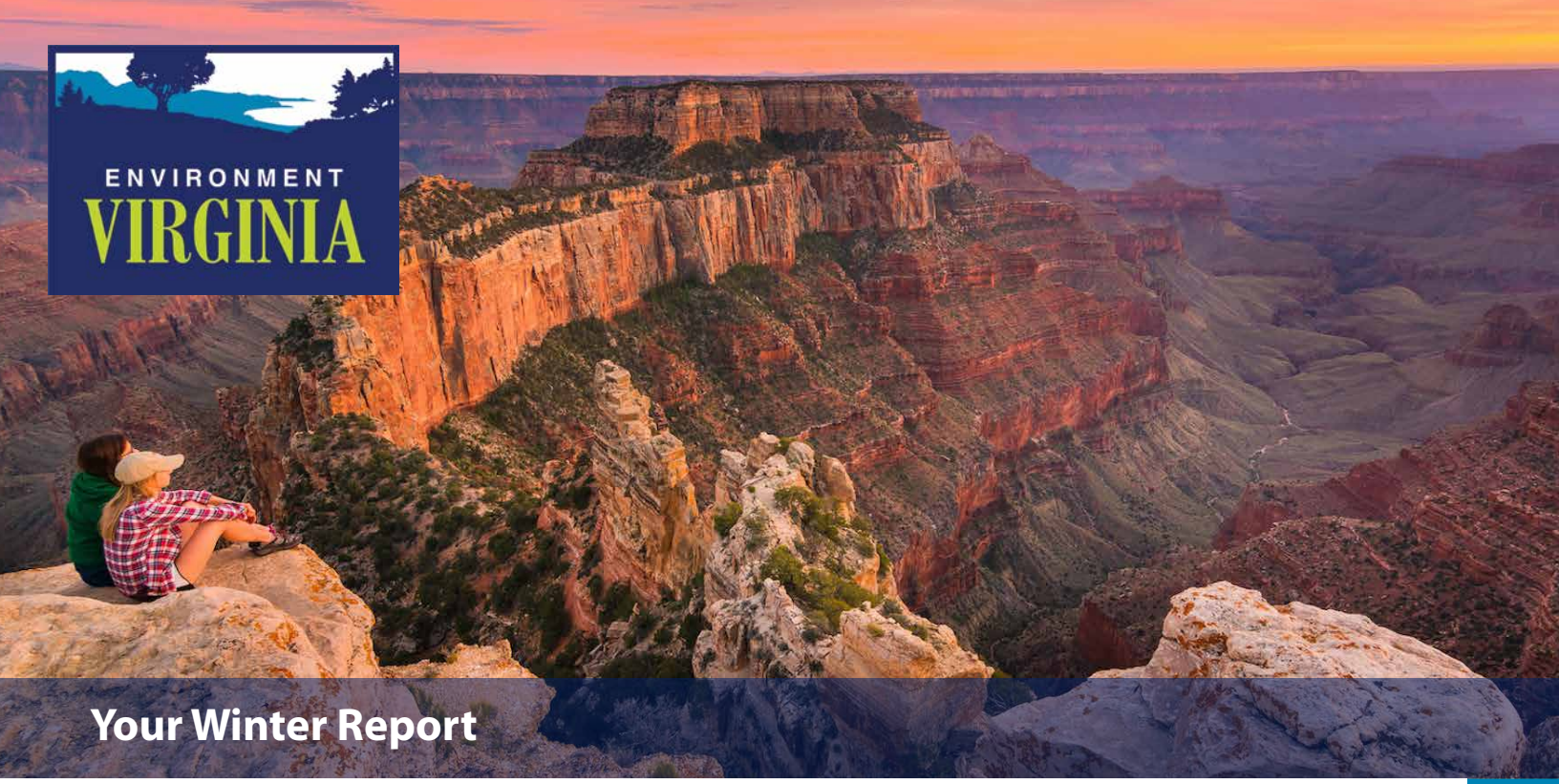
ENVIRONMENT VIRGINIA



Your Winter Report

‘Yes, we canyon!’ Welcoming a new national monument

By Ellen Montgomery, director of our national public lands campaigns

With the stroke of a pen, last August the president established a new national monument on the threatened land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park, permanently making this land off-limits to mining. This action protects about 900,000 acres of land from pollution.

We’re celebrating thanks to supporters like you who told President Biden that uranium mining doesn’t belong anywhere near this natural wonder.

You never forget your first visit to the Grand Canyon

No matter where you live, or how long ago you visited, you never forget your first glimpse of the Grand Canyon’s majestic walls; the deep hues of red, orange, yellow and green that shift by the hour; and the seemingly unfathomable distances from the rim to the canyon floor.

The Grand Canyon isn’t just a wondrous beauty for visitors, it’s also critical for wildlife. The park’s 1,900 square miles and the surrounding area serve as an ecological refuge for many threatened and endangered species such as the California condor, the Mexican spotted owl and the little brown bat.

The Grand Canyon is too important to destroy with toxic mining. More than 600 uranium mining claims surrounding the park, some as close as 10 miles from the park boundary, threatened to contaminate the greater Grand Canyon area with radioactive pollution.



Staff collect photo petitions at the Grand Canyon in support of its permanent protection from toxic uranium mining.

New mining would have brought in heavy equipment to dig massive pits or pump chemicals into the groundwater. That groundwater feeds a river that supplies drinking water to 40 million Americans. Any one of the operations could leak radioactive materials into groundwater, or pollute the air with radioactive dust, threatening local residents, park visitors, as well as wildlife—from bald eagles and bighorn sheep to Gila monsters and desert tortoises.

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Thanks for making it all possible

State-by-state progress: Wind and solar energy tripled over past decade

In 2022, the United States produced more than three times as much solar, wind and geothermal power than the country did in 2013, with growth in all 50 states. That's according to "Renewables on the Rise 2023," an online dashboard unveiled on Oct. 11 by our research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group. You can check out the Renewables on the Rise 2023 dashboard and see data for Virginia on our website.

Tim O'Connor



Johanna Neumann, senior director of our national Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy, tours a warehouse rooftop with solar panels. Our latest Renewables on the Rise dashboard showed that renewable energy has tripled in the U.S. over the past decade.

"Abundant and clean renewable energy sources, most notably wind and solar, are increasingly playing a leading role in how we power our lives," said Johanna Neumann, senior director of Environment America Research & Policy Center's Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy.

"The sooner we power our lives with renewable energy, the better it will be for our health and our planet."

The Renewables on the Rise 2023 dashboard details progress over the past decade in six areas—wind, solar, electric vehicles, electric vehicle charging, energy efficiency and battery storage—that are key elements in the transition to a future powered by clean and renewable resources.

The data compiled for the 2023 dashboard predates the impact of expanded clean energy tax credits and other new federal incentives. Coupled with state clean energy goals and other programs, the federal incentives should spark even greater adoption of renewable energy in 2024 and beyond.

Victory: Amazon announces end of plastic-padded shipping bags

In July 2023, Amazon announced that it is "phasing out padded bags containing plastics in favor of recyclable alternatives."

The eventual end of the blue and white plastic mailing envelopes is welcome news. Most plastic is landfilled, burned in incinerators, or broken into small pieces in the environment, rather than being recycled. Plastics have been found in nearly every corner of the globe, as well as in human bodies, potentially with harmful impacts.

Amazon is changing its practices after Environment Virginia worked with PIRG and other allies to call on the company to reduce its single-use plastic packaging. Similar actions also have resulted in 1 in every 3 Americans living in a state with a ban of at least one type of single-use plastic.

Thanks to your action and support, we'll continue to urge companies to reduce wasteful plastic packaging.

A New England ocean haven deserves stronger protection

In welcome news for the whales, dolphins and deep-sea coral off the New England coast, the Biden administration released a draft management plan for the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument last September. The draft plan, when implemented, will inform science, outreach and resource protection for the ocean life hotspot.

Canyons and Seamounts is a spectacular ocean habitat for many majestic and rare marine species. Today, the monument is one of the few areas of the United States' Atlantic territory set to be protected against almost all forms of destructive human activities.

"Every time scientists fly over the Canyons or deep sea robots dive on the Seamounts, they uncover previously unknown and exciting ways our ocean life uses this haven," said Kelsey Lamp, director of our national Protect our Oceans campaign. "I'm excited to see the Biden administration move full steam ahead to finalize a plan that will bring more research, more resources and more public attention to this wild, wondrous place."

Get more updates on our work online at https://environmentvirginia.org.



Toward a greener future

Support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future by including a gift to Environment Virginia or Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentVirginia.org



Deep Desert Photography via Shutterstock

Page 1 story continued:

‘Yes, we canyon!’

For countless ecological, historical and cultural reasons, the Grand Canyon is too precious to risk the pollution that mining brings.

A decade of advocacy and action

For more than a decade, Environment Virginia and our national network has worked with coalition partners to protect it permanently from mining and other polluting and extractive activities.

Back in 2012, we helped win a 20-year moratorium on new uranium mining claims surrounding the park. A decade later, we joined the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition to call on President Biden to establish a national monument on these threatened lands.

We were up against opposition from the mining industry—but we were successful in making the case for permanent protection.

Our research documented the risks of uranium mining, including contaminated water, airborne uranium dust and toxic chemicals.

Our organizers helped win the support of key constituencies and earned coverage in local and national news outlets.

Our national network delivered more than 29,000 petition signatures last summer, many from members like you, opposing uranium mining in the Grand Canyon to the Biden administration. And our staff testified in Flagstaff, Arizona, to make the case for no new mining.

Thanks to President Biden and Interior Secretary Deb Haaland for designating the Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni–Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. Congratulations to the tribes, our conservation community allies, outdoor business leaders and more who came together to help keep the Grand Canyon safe from dirty and dangerous uranium mining forever. And it’s support from members and other environmentalists like you that allows us to defend our most special places from destruction.

Our staff testified in Flagstaff, Arizona, to make the case for no new mining.



Staff

Featured staff



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Elly Boehmer Wilson
State Director

A former canvass director and organizer with Impact, Elly now directs Environment Virginia’s efforts to promote clean air, clean water and open spaces in Virginia. Elly lives in Richmond, Virginia, where she enjoys gardening, photography, hiking and rollerblading with her dog.

50 YEARS
ACTION FOR A CHANGE

Environment Virginia and The Public Interest Network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.

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ENVIRONMENT VIRGINIA

Your 2024 Winter Report

Our mission:

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Virginia, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Virginia's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Three surprising facts about bees

Most bees in the U.S. live very different lives than you may have heard. Here are three facts about wild bees that might surprise you:

1. They don't all hail the queen. European honeybees may be headed by a queen bee, but they're more the exception than the rule—more than 75% of all bee species are solitary and don't have a queen.

2. They don't all make honey. Bumblebees can make small batches of a honey-like substance, and the cellophane bee brews a beer-like beverage from fermented pollen and agave nectar, but no wild bee produces the kind of honey that we eat.

3. They face extinction. Wild bees may be wildly diverse, but they all deal with the same threats: climate change, habitat loss and the widespread use of bee-killing pesticides.

And here's one more fact: Your support of Environment Virginia gives our team of researchers, advocates and organizers the resources we need to win protections for all bees.

Together, we're calling on major corporations to stop selling bee-killing pesticides, urging lawmakers to expand bee-friendly habitat, and providing the public with tips and guides to help us all do our part to make the world a little more welcoming to bees.

Learn more fun facts about bees and how you can take action to save the bees on our website.



Dave Angelini

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